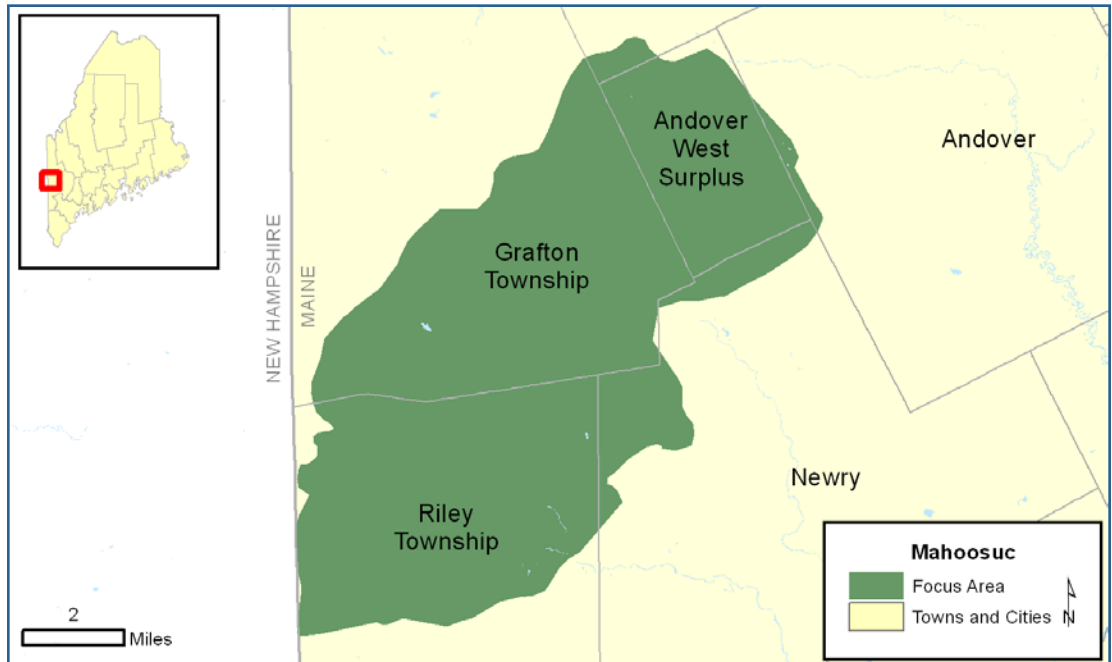
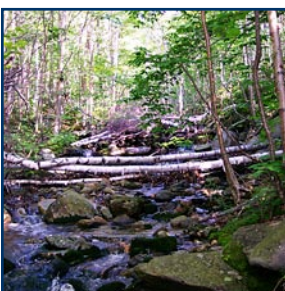
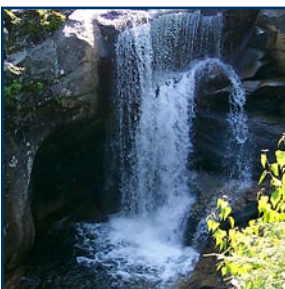
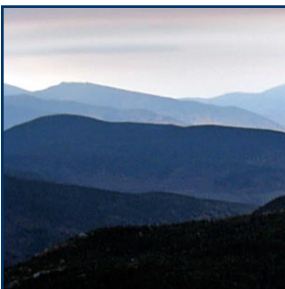
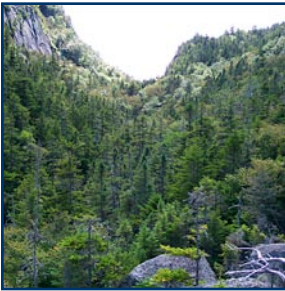


# Mahoosuc



## WHY IS THIS AREA SIGNIFICANT?

The Mahoosuc Focus Area encompasses an intact landscape of striking alpine ridges, exceptional hiking trails, scenic waterfalls, precipitous cliffs, expansive forests, and other features of high ecological, scenic, and recreational value. The Focus Area is home to 10 plant species that are rare in Maine, and it features 6 types of natural communities that are considered rare or exemplary in the state.

## OPPORTUNITIES FOR CONSERVATION

- » Work with willing landowners to permanently protect remaining undeveloped areas.
- » Educate recreational users about the ecological and economic benefits provided by the Focus Area.
- » Because trail overuse is the most likely source of human impacts on the alpine ridges and associated habitats, these impacts may be mitigated most effectively through proper trail construction, monitoring trail usage, and outreach to recreational visitors.

For more conservation opportunities, visit the Beginning with Habitat Online Toolbox: [www.beginningwithhabitat.org/toolbox/about\\_toolbox.html](http://www.beginningwithhabitat.org/toolbox/about_toolbox.html).

*Photo credits, top to bottom: Maine Natural Areas Program, Julie LePage, Julie LePage, Maine Natural Areas Program, Maine Natural Areas Program*

## Rare Animals

Peregrine Falcon

## Rare Plants

Boreal Bentgrass  
Bigelow's Sedge  
Lapland Diapensia  
Northern Comandra  
Alpine Sweet-grass  
Appalachian Fir-clubmoss  
Mountain Sandwort  
Silverling  
Cutler's Goldenrod  
Alpine Blueberry

## Rare and Exemplary Natural Communities

Northern Hardwoods Forest  
Mid-elevation Bald  
Heath Alpine Ridge  
Subalpine Fir Forest  
Spruce–Pine Woodland  
Spruce–Northern Hardwoods Forest

## Significant Wildlife Habitats

Inland Wading Bird and Waterfowl Habitat

## Public Access Opportunities

- » Appalachian Trail
- » Grafton Notch State Park
- » Mahoosuc Public Reserve Land





*Maine Natural Areas Program (both)*

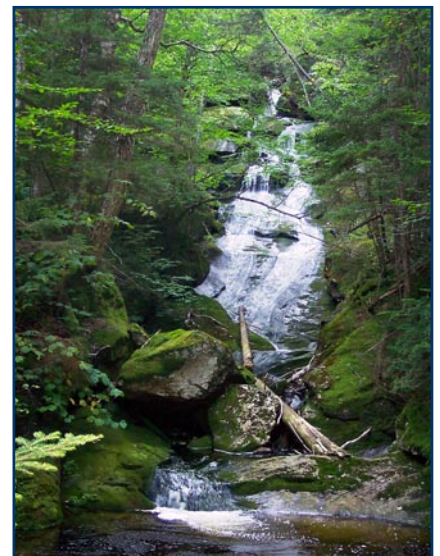
## **FOCUS AREA OVERVIEW**

The Mahoosuc Focus Area encompasses roughly 45,000 acres of the rugged Mahoosuc Range straddling Grafton Notch in western Maine. The Mahoosuc Range, which has 10 peaks that rise over 3,000 feet (including the 4,170-foot Old Speck), is an extension of the White Mountains northeastward into Maine. The Mahoosuc Focus Area features a diversity of habitats and natural features that span a broad range of elevations, including waterfalls, cliffs, valleys, sub-alpine summits, and upland forests.

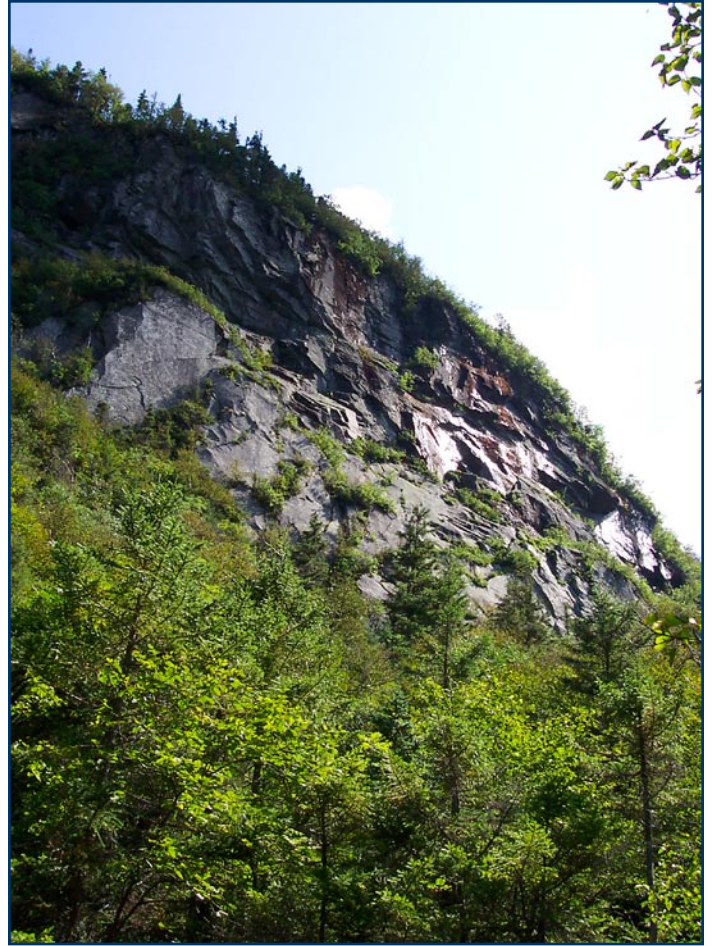
State conservation lands make up more than 80% of the Focus Area, and the Appalachian Trail traverses across the ridgetops of the Focus Area from the New Hampshire border to Baldpate Mountain. Other recreational trails access the ridgetop from several directions. Nearly one quarter of the Focus Area is over 2,700 feet in elevation and supports sub-alpine forest and krummholz. At lower elevations, slopes are dominated by mature hardwood and mixed forests. Most of the forest stands have been actively managed for forest products in the past, but some areas, including a northern hardwood forest in Mahoosuc Notch, show no evidence of cutting and are late successional to old growth. In addition, some mid-elevation conifer-dominated stands also show little sign of past harvesting, with trees over 245 years old.

Included within the Focus Area, the Mahoosuc Ecological Reserve extends from 1,120 feet to 3,980 feet in elevation and is second only to the Bigelow Ecological Reserve in elevational gradient. It is the Department of Conservation's third largest reserve in the state. Most of the Mahoosuc Ecological Reserve (8,458 acres) has been classified as sub-alpine forest, and 259 acres have been classified as alpine ridge—the most alpine habitat of any of the state's 16 ecological reserves. This alpine ridge supports several populations of rare plants (10 species) restricted to this habitat type.

Numerous headwater streams provide well-oxygenated







*Maine Natural Areas Program (both)*

aquatic habitat for fish and insects. Aside from these streams and Speck Pond, which is a high elevation pond or tarn, the steep topography limits the formation of wetlands throughout the Focus Area. Upland forests therefore provide increased importance in buffering both the Bear and Sandy Rivers.

Within the last decade, peregrine falcons have nested at Eyebrow Ledge on Old Speck, and peregrines historically nested on Lightning Ledge on Mt. Hittie.

### **CONSERVATION CONSIDERATIONS**

- » Most of the areas of highest ecological significance are within state ownership. The Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands last revised its management plan for this area in 1998 and will be updating it within the next few years.
- » Remaining areas within private ownership are primarily around the perimeter of the Focus Area and include lower-elevation slopes of managed forest.

#### **Ecological Services of the Focus Area**

- Provides intact source habitat for numerous plant and animal species
- Provides water-quality buffer for Bear and Sandy Rivers
- Located within identified landscape scale Appalachian habitat corridor

#### **Economic Contributions of the Focus Area**

- Conservation efforts to date protect scenic nature of region and viewsheds of nearby resorts and tourist attractions

- » Trail overuse is the most likely source of human impacts on the alpine ridges and associated habitats. These impacts may be mitigated most effectively by monitoring, proper trail construction, and outreach.

**RARE SPECIES AND EXEMPLARY NATURAL COMMUNITIES OF THE FOCUS AREA**

	Common Name	Scientific Name	State Status*	State Rarity Rank	Global Rarity Rank
Animals and Plants	Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>	E	S1S2	G4
	Boreal Bentgrass	<i>Agrostis mertensii</i>	T	S2	G5
	Bigelow's Sedge	<i>Carex bigelowii</i>	SC	S2	G5
	Lapland Diapensia	<i>Diapensia lapponica</i>	SC	S2	G5
	Northern Comandra	<i>Geocaulon lividum</i>	SC	S3	G5
	Alpine Sweet-grass	<i>Hierochloe alpina</i>	T	S1	G5
	Appalachian Fir-clubmoss	<i>Huperzia appalachiana</i>	SC	S2	G4G5
	Mountain Sandwort	<i>Minuartia groenlandica</i>	SC	S3	G5
	Silverling	<i>Paronychia argyrocoma</i>	T	S1	G4
	Cutler's Goldenrod	<i>Solidago multiradiata var. arctica</i>	T	S1	G5
	Alpine Blueberry	<i>Vaccinium boreale</i>	SC	S2	G4
	Northern Hardwoods Forest	Beech–Birch–Maple Forest		S4	G3G5
Natural Communities	Mid-elevation Bald	Crowberry–Bilberry Summit Bald		S3	G2G3
	Heath Alpine Ridge	Dwarf Heath–Graminoid Alpine Ridge		S2	n/a
	Subalpine Fir Forest	Fir–Heart-leaved Birch Subalpine Forest		S3	n/a
	Spruce - Pine Woodland	Red Spruce–Mixed Conifer Woodland		S4	G3G5
	Spruce - Northern Hardwoods Forest	Spruce–Northern Hardwoods Forest		S4	n/a

**State Status\***

E	Endangered: Rare and in danger of being lost from the state in the foreseeable future, or federally listed as Endangered.
T	Threatened: Rare and, with further decline, could become endangered; or federally listed as Threatened.
SC	Special Concern: Rare in Maine, based on available information, but not sufficiently rare to be Threatened or Endangered.

\*State status rankings are not assigned to natural communities.

**State Rarity Rank**

S1	Critically imperiled in Maine because of extreme rarity (5 or fewer occurrences or very few remaining individuals or acres).
S2	Imperiled in Maine because of rarity (6–20 occurrences or few remaining individuals or acres) or because of other factors making it vulnerable to further decline.
S3	Rare in Maine (on the order of 20–100 occurrences).
S4	Apparently secure in Maine.
S5	Demonstrably secure in Maine.

**Global Rarity Rank**

G1	Critically imperiled globally because of extreme rarity (5 or fewer occurrences or very few remaining individuals or acres) or because some aspect of its biology makes it especially vulnerable to extirpation.
G2	Globally imperiled because of rarity (6–20 occurrences or few remaining individuals or acres) or because of other factors making it vulnerable to further decline.
G3	Globally rare (on the order of 20–100 occurrences).
G4	Apparently secure globally.
G5	Demonstrably secure globally.